

# THE COURSE OF GOVERNMENT TODAY

## How Should the Christian View It?

*Professor Herman A. Hoyt, Grace Theological Seminary  
The Brethren Herald*

*July, 1939*

The consummation of the age must be upon us, for today there is "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth" (Luke 21:25-26). But whether the consummation of the age is upon us, or not, we are nevertheless seeing the world plunge with vicious rapidity into a seething, boiling, political Maelstrom which will ultimately engulf the entire world, and hasten the end of the age. And as the Christian views the governments of the world in their mad rush for power and prestige, he is compelled to consider them in relation to the plan of God, and in relation to his own personal responsibility. With this in mind, let us search out the mind of God in this matter.

In the first place, God presents the **NATURE** of world government under the figure of wild beasts. "And four great beasts came up from the sea....The first was like a lion,....a second like a bear....another like a leopard....and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible" (Dan. 7:3-7). And while these four beasts, here mentioned, represent four specific world governments, it is worth noting that the nature of each is like that of a beast, which establishes the fact that the nature of all world government is bestial in the eyes of God.

Moreover, it is the wild, ferocious, undomesticated beasts of the jungles that are used to represent



world government. Such beasts have been termed wild because they are wilful, moved by their own selfish and vicious appetites. And what could more properly depict the greed and self-will among nations today, as they look with covetous eyes upon the territory and possessions of others. This wilfulness produces lawlessness and the failure to control these covetous passions, and hence treaties and agreements become mere scrapes of paper. With eyes of passion upon coveted things, and bound by no law except the law of their own desire, the nations like beasts break coveted things, and bound by no law except the law of their own desire, the nations like beasts break

into violence of the most fierce and insane character to attain their ends. Is it any wonder, that such beasts, under which figure world government has been placed, are described as undomesticated animals which contribute nothing of real and lasting benefit to society?

With these things in mind we should be reminded that the nature of wild beasts never changes. Animal trainers, whose years of experience with these beasts of the jungle have taught them some things, will testify that wild beasts are never tamed or changed. They are trained, but the nature remains the same, and may at any moment break out in all of its wild ferocity. And so it is with the nations, for their underlying nature remains the same. And though there may be periods of apparent peacefulness and docility, it derneath there is that wild, untamed, lawless spirit belonging to this world, which, at the moment least expected, will break forth with savage onslaught upon peoples and nations of any tongue. Nor will there ever be a time that the nations of the world will be safe until men are all regenerated and the Lord Himself sets up His own kingdom in the earth.

In the second place, the **CREEDS** of governments are the creations of the nature which they possess. In that connection it was the Psalmist who said: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed" (Ps. 2:1-2). And since it is out of the heart that evil thoughts proceed, the Psalmist is here making note of the fact that the people are imagining a vain thing and the rulers are taking counsel against the Lord and His Christ, all of which are the fruits of unregenerate, savage nature.

Keeping in mind the fact that a nature produces a creed like the nature, let us analyze some of the creeds of world governments today. Since the very essence of the nature of wild beasts is selfishness, we may expect to find that the root of the creed of every world government includes this and in some way provides for its political expression. Moreover, we may further expect to find that this selfishness will in some way manifest its hatred of the Lord and His Christ, just as the Psalmist declared.

Among world governments today that take prominence in our thinking, there are Russia, Germany, Italy, Japan and some few others, each possessing a political creed that properly represents their nature, and provides the basis for their political operations. For instance, in Russia the political creed is communism, the very heart of which is an attack upon God, the plan being to spread atheism over the entire earth. In Germany the creed is Naziism, which holds that Germany is for Germans and the pagan faith. Hence, away with Jews and the Jewish Bible. Thus it can be easily seen that this too is ultimately against the Lord and His Christ. Then in Italy the Creed is Fascism which likewise holds that Italy is for the Italians, but even more than that,—the world is for the Italians, therefore a greater Italy. Anyone can see that this creed too is without regard for God. It need hardly be said here that Shintoism, which is the religious as well as the political creed of Japan, is pagan and sees only the selfish expansion of Japan beyond her own borders. Then it may also be said that what is true of the creeds of these nations is likewise true of all nations.

This leads the Christian to wonder what may happen in the government of the United States. And in

answer to this, one should be reminded that our government is just another one of the governments of this world, and like all the rest possesses a beast-like nature. While up to the present the beast has shown a peaceful disposition, there has nevertheless been manifestations that the wild, untamed nature is there, and when we least expect it, it will break forth in all of its wild, savage violence. Within recent years there has been a movement away from the Christianity of the founders and a movement in the direction of unbelief. And it can only be expected that sooner or later the savage, unregenerate nature which it possesses will show itself.

It need only be said here in passing that nature and creed form the two sources from which the wild, uncontrolled, savage violence of the nations proceed. The nature supplies the moral source, and creed supplies the intellectual source of political operations. And just as we have seen persecution of the faith and the faithful proceeding from these two sources in other lands, we may expect that eventually such will be the experience in this land of ours. In view of these things, what is the responsibility of the Christian?

In the last place, let us note the **RELATION** of the Christian to world governments as set forth in the word of God.

First, there are some facts concerning world government which the Christian should recognize. He should recognize that world government belongs to an order which is evil, for the apostle John says: "For all that is in the world... is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I Jn. 2:16). He should also recognize that world government belongs to a passing order. Here again John says: "And the world passeth away and the lust thereof" (I Jn. 2:

17). And yet again, he should recognize that world government shall come into a period of judgment into which the Christian shall never come, for the promise is to the Christian that "because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

Second, in view of these facts, there is a certain responsibility that rests upon every Christian. In the first place, since world governments belong to an evil order, the Christian should "Love not the world, neither the things in the world" (I John 2:15). For in loving the world or anything in the world is an evidence that such a Christian is merely a professed Christian. And how important it is at the present time for every Christian to realize that his love should not be set upon any form of government. With government everywhere now showing the evil nature which lies underneath what used to appear as lamb-like exterior, there is more reason than ever for the Christian not to set his loves and his hopes upon them.

Then in the second place, in view of the passing character of world governments, the Christian should be doing the will of God. And the will of God for the believer is not only that of being separated from the world, but the propagation of the Word of God that by some means some might be saved out of the world (I John 2:17). One of these days, "The kingdoms of this world" will "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). And all those men and women who make up the present kingdoms of the world and who know not Christ will perish. Therefore, it is necessary for the believer to be about the task of witnessing in

order that some might be saved.

And finally, in view of the fact that the Christian must now go through trial, but will be saved from the hour of awful trial to come upon the whole world, he should be patient and longsuffering toward the world that as much fruit as possible may be gathered in the harvest. James has that very thing in mind when he counsels oppressed brethren to "be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (Jas. 5:7). He has in mind the fact that it is the prerogative of the Lord to execute judgment, and the reason He now withholds judgment is that every effort may be expended to bring the news of salvation to lost men. The great husbandman looks to the harvest of souls, as should the Christian likewise (Jas. 5:7).

---